This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for operating a slot machine including a plurality of reels and a plurality of symbols on said reels, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   maintaining a list of award-yielding symbol combinations of said plurality of symbols in a controller;

(b)   randomly generating on a plurality of paylines associated with said reels a first set of the symbols from the plurality of symbols, said first set including a plurality of symbols generated on each of a plurality of the reels, and each of the symbols in the first set of symbols is adapted for individual replacement;

(c)   providing a player an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set on any of the paylines before any of the symbols ~~said symbol~~ can be replaced;

(d)   selecting a plurality but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement, said symbols being all of the plurality of symbols generated on one of the reels and individually replacing each said selected symbol in the first set with one of the plurality of symbols to generate a second set of the symbols, the second set of symbols displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(e)   providing the player an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set on any of the paylines even if any said award yielding symbol combination in the second set appeared in the first set and even if an award was ~~is~~ provided for said symbol combination in step (c).

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of individually replacing the symbols includes an animation of the symbols which are replaced.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of individually replacing the symbols includes individually replacing the selected symbols without spinning the reels.

Claims 5 and 6 (canceled)

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein generating the first set of symbols and second set of symbols is part of a bonus game.

Claim 8 (canceled)

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for each selected symbol in the first set, and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol of the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for each selected symbol in the first set, and wherein each said wild symbol sequentially functions as at least one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol includes individually replacing one of the other symbols on a plurality of reels, wherein said symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method of Claim 12, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol on another one of said reels, wherein each said wild symbols function as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one other of the symbols in a row of symbols along a plurality of reels of the slot machine, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (previously presented): A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of reels and a plurality of symbols on the reels, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of award yielding symbol combinations of said plurality of symbols;

(b) generating a first set of said symbols on the reels, wherein one of said symbols in said first set is a first wild symbol, said first set including a plurality of generated symbols on each of a plurality of the reels;

(c) providing a player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set including any award yielding symbol combinations that include the first wild symbol, the first wild symbol functioning as one of the other symbols to maximize the award yielding combinations;

(d) selecting a plurality but not all of the symbols in the first set except for the first wild symbol in the set for individual replacement, said symbols being all of the plurality of symbols generated on one of the reels and individually replacing each said selected symbol with a second wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(e) providing the player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set including any award yielding symbol combinations created with the first wild symbol and any award yielding symbol combinations created with the first and the second wild symbols, wherein each of the first and the second wild symbols function as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations, wherein the award for each award yielding symbol combination in the second set is in addition to the award for each award yielding symbol combination in the first set.

Claims 18 and 19 (canceled)

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol of one row of symbols on the reels, wherein said row includes said generated wild symbol.

Claim 21 (canceled)

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one other predetermined generated symbol.

Claims 23 and 24 (canceled)

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the steps (a) to (e) are provided to a player through a data network.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method of Claim 25, wherein the data network is an internet.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the steps (a) to (e) are provided to a player through a data network.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of Claim 27, wherein the data network is an internet.

Claims 29 and 30 (canceled)

Claim 31 (currently amended): A method for determining an award in a slot machine including a plurality of reels, a plurality of symbols on said reels and a plurality of award yielding combinations of said symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   randomly generating on a plurality of paylines associated with the reels a first set of said symbols, said first set including a plurality of symbols on each of a plurality of reels;

(b)   <u>evaluating said first set to determine if any award yielding symbol combinations are displayed and</u> providing a player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set on any of said paylines;

(c)   selecting a plurality but not all of the symbols in said first set for individual replacement <u>whether or not any award yielding symbol combinations are displayed in the first set</u>, said symbols being at least two predetermined symbols on the reels and individually replacing each said selected symbol with one of the symbols to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(d)   <u>evaluating said second set to determine if any award yielding symbol combinations are displayed and</u> providing the player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set on any of said paylines including all award yielding symbol combinations in the second set even if an award was provided for such award yielding combinations in the first set and even if an award is provided for said symbol combination in step <u>(b)</u> (c).

Claim 32 (previously presented): A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of reels, a plurality of symbols on said reels and a plurality of award yielding combinations of said symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) generating a first set of said symbols on the reels, wherein one of said symbols in said set is a first wild symbol and said first set includes a plurality of generated symbols on each of a plurality of the reels;

(b) providing a player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations in said first set;

(c) individually substituting a second wild symbol for each of a plurality but not all of the symbols in said first set except for said first wild symbol, said substituted symbols being predetermined symbols, to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

(d) providing the player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set, including each award yielding combination including said first wild symbol only and including both the first and the second wild symbols and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of said symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations in said second set, wherein the award for each award yielding symbol combination in the second set is in addition to the award for each award yielding symbol combination in the first set.

Claim 33 (canceled)

Claim 34 (currently amended): A slot machine comprising:

a plurality of reels and a plurality of paylines with the reels;

a plurality of symbols on said reels, said symbols including a wild symbol;

a plurality of symbol combinations that each yield an award if generated by said reels; and

a processor which controls said reels, wherein said processor:

(i)   causes the reels to generate a first set of said symbols along the paylines, said first set including a plurality of symbols on ~~of~~ each of a plurality of the reels,

(ii)   provides an award to a player for each award yielding symbol combination in said first set on any of the paylines, said wild symbol functioning as at least one other non-wild symbol,

(iii)   substitutes another one of the non-wild symbols in said first set with another wild symbol at each of the plurality of generated symbols on the reel with the wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols, and

(iv)   provides an additional award to the player for each award yielding symbol combination in said second set on any of the paylines, regardless of whether the combination includes a wild symbol, wherein each wild symbol functions as at least one other non-wild symbol.

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Claim 35 (previously presented): A gaming device comprising:

a processor;

a memory device which maintains a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding symbol combinations, wherein the processor communicates with the memory device to:

generate a first set of symbols on a plurality of reels, wherein one of said symbols is a first wild symbol and where the first set includes a plurality of symbols on each of a plurality of the reels;

provide an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set, wherein said first wild symbol functions as one of the symbols;

individually substitute a second wild symbol for a plurality but not all other non-wild symbols in said first set, said substituted symbols being all of the plurality of symbols on one of the reels to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

provide an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set, the combinations including the first wild symbol only and including both the first and second wild symbols, wherein each wild symbol including the first and second wild symbols function as one of the symbols.

Claim 36 (canceled)